

A challenge. Start reading. If you make it to the end, you'll know what to do next.

As this instant in North Korea, as many as 100,000 helpless people are being subjected to conditions so extreme that it is hard to believe it is really happening.

These people are held in slave labour camps hidden in remote mountain wildernesses. Most will never be released. They will die of hunger, cold, exhaustion, disease, brutalty, torture, or execution. These secret places of horror have been killing people for more than fifty years.

If you can't bear hard things, don't read this. You will have nightmares.

Imagine that your everyday life is a dream and that you are about to wake. You try to hold on to your dream, to see how it ends, but it always ends the same way.

Your eyes open into darkness. You are freezing. Your feet and fingers are burning with cold, the food stags before you. You have no warm thing to cover you. Your ragged clothes are stiff with ice, but at least the cold has killed the fleas and lice that usually torment you. You are in a hut that stinks of filthy bodies. There's no heat. As dawn breaks over snow-covered mountains outside, the temperature in here is 20°C.

But this is not the worst.



관리소 YODOK

Kwaniso (Political Prison Camp) 15 at Yodok encloses 370 square kilometres of mountain and river valleys, a perimeter of cliffs stitched together by barbed wire and high-voltage electric fences. What we know of Yodok comes from the few people who were released and who later managed to flee North Korea. All were held in a part of Yodok called

So many people you have seen die, from whippings, floggings, executions, starvation but you hardly count yourself lucky to be alive. It still hurts from where they broke your leg, where you were burned over a fire, from when they gave you electric shocks. You can tell how long you've been here by the number of toes and fingers you have left. It is hard to remember anything before the camp. What did you do to deserve this? They never told you. Justice has no meaning here. But injustice is not the worst thing.

간수 AHN

Ahn Myong-gul was 19 when he was assigned to be a guard at Hyesoyung, Camp 22. He recalls the shock he felt when he arrived. Almost a third of the inmates passing by had torn off ears, smashed eyes, battered noses and faces covered with cuts and scars.

Ahn was told to regard inmates not as

realise you gave up hope long ago. Hope you can live without. Work is your whole life. Stare hours a day, every day, you crush stones, bend necks from re-coloured riers, stop logs, back at seams in a mine, weed fields by hand. Sometimes it's worth a beating just to get a rest. Each day seems endless, but at last, your wracked bones sting like amuls under a hammer, you shuffle back to the hut. Exhaustion is not the worst thing.

Mrs L., a housewife from Pyongyang, had been carrying loads of human faeces all day to transfer into the camp's huge cesspool. She was very tired. The lid of the tank stank. She climbed on the tank to push the door open, but slipped on the rain-wet surface, plunged into the deep pool of faeces and vanished beneath the surface. A guard shouted, 'Stop! Let her die there unless you yourselves want to

mothers tried to nourish their young children by catching pregnant rats. The placentas and tiny fetuses made rich eating and were believed to cure disease. Kang ate centipedes and learned to resist salamanders, which were thought to provide the vitamins for survival, but his first attempt to eat one was a failure.

'I pushed it into my mouth, but I could not swallow. The creature was small, like a mouse, I was frightened. I closed my eyes and bit it hard. My mouth was suddenly full of bitter and stinking juice and I had to spit it out.'

The only way to eat one was to hold it by the tail and gulp it down in one.

도주 SHIN

Shin Dong-gyuk knew no life other than that of *haezulo* 14, at Kaechon. His parents were inmates who, as a reward for good work, had been allowed to inhabit and spend a few nights a year together. Shin was born a slave destined to live out his whole life and die in Kaechon's Total Control Zone.

In a way Shin was lucky because his mother's pregnancy had not been authorised. She might have been forced to kill him. A camp survivor described how she saw guards compel a distraught woman to drown her baby in a bucket.



because the truth is impossible to imagine.

절망 DESPAIR

In the cold, dark night you lie awake and curse yourself for imagining freedom. It will never come. Not for you. If you knew that just one person somewhere remembered you, it would be a comfort, but you - you have fallen from the world of humans into a great darkness. You have been forgotten.

Poor lonely little animal. No one thinks or cares about you. Alone, afraid, hungry, in pain, you have been abandoned to your fate.

On June 19 2013 the regime warned would be defectors. Scared human scam will never



stars. That tiny moving light is a satellite on a rescue mission.

Amnesty International has worked since the 1970s to expose the truth about the North Korean gulag.

In recent years we have been keeping watch over the camps from space, paying for satellites to photograph them, noting details, analysing the smallest changes.

Photos taken by Amnesty's Science for Human Rights programme prove that the regime is actively maintaining its political prison camps.

The latest images show that Kaedon 16 at Hyesoyung is expanding. The infrastructure of brutal repression is growing.

불 LIGHT

Watching from afar may not seem like much, but as Amnesty's founder, Peter Benenson wrote: 'It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness.'

The North Korean regime may deny the camps' existence, but the evidence of the moving stars cannot be denied.

Amnesty is shining a bright light into the silent darkness of the North Korean gulag to prove that it is real, horribly alive and getting bigger.

By helping the voices of those who have suffered in the camps be heard around the world, and by making their terrifying work and impossible to ignore, or dismiss, we hurry and chip at Supreme Leader Kim Jong-un's pride. And the Supreme Leader wobbles.

were underwear not was free of hair?

Shin was trained to snitch on his friends. He would lick soup off the floor, never knew even basic health care, aged ten was set to work down a coal mine, had part of a finger axed off for breaking a sewing machine, saw a girl at his camp school learn to die for stealing five

books of corn and was dragged out to watch his mother and brother executed. His fortune changed when he met an older prisoner, Park, who told him about life outside the camp, beyond North Korea. In January 2005 Shin and his friend Park went through Kaechon's 3,000 wall fence. Park did quivering on the wire. Shin scrambled over his body, while Park and occasionally found his way to Seoul.

able to look up to the sky and will never find their end.

항성 STAR

Phase class your eyes and imagine Yodok, lying under a thick blanket of snow. It's a night of brilliant stars but the prisoners, unheeding, sliver in their unheated huts, trying to sleep.

They do not see it, but high above, a point of light is moving through the fixed

Once in the free world, Shin, like Kang who served ten years in Yodok before being released, found that many people did not believe, or did not want to believe, that they were telling the truth. It was hard to bear: 'The North Koreans say the defectors are lying and flatly deny the existence of any camps.'

The regime says, 'There is no human rights issue in this country as everyone leads the most dignified and happy life.' If people can't face the truth maybe it's

Shin grew up eating bark off trees and thinking it was normal. He would search for dung for undigested seeds. He tried not to defecate as the thought of constipation stifled hunger. What sort of child was he, who'd never seen a football, who used a diamond stick to urinate, never learned to multiply or divide, who could faced for six hours on a concrete floor, who believed from birth that he had to wash away the sins of his parents by hard work, who rarely touched soap, never

found his way to Seoul.

치명적인 HUNGER

The worst thing is hunger. Hunger is the enemy that never gives a moment's peace. It slashes at your life, retts eating you from inside. It fills your mind. You'd give anything, risk your life, for a morsel to put in your mouth. Once you were strong. Look at you now, a stumbling skeleton, limbs swollen from starvation.

In Yodok starving inmates hunted anything that 'flow, crawled, or grew in the field'.

'We had no food,' Kang says. 'We ate anything we could lay hands on, frogs, snakes, rats, insects.'

A guard caught a prisoner trying to chew an oxal whip for nourishment; he beat him harshly and forced him to eat intestinal worms picked from a latrine. The man died.

There were *pedagira* in the camps and

die the same way!

Many prisoners died from hard work, poor treatment and beatings. At *haezulo* 14, Kaechon, the dead bodies were often buried in the prison orchard. The fruits (apples, pears, peaches, and plums) for the Kaechon orchard are famous for their large size and extraordinary sweetness. They are reserved for senior party and police officials.

human but as 'talk-less animals' on whom it was acceptable to practise the most savage brutality. If a prisoner resisted an order or tried to escape, Ahn was allowed to kill him. Killing an escapee earned the guard the reward of going to college.

One of Ahn's colleagues urged a man to climb over the barbed wire fence, then shot him. He went to college.

Ahn was sent to guard the camp's pig farm. Working there was a 26-year-old woman called Han Jin-duk. She caught the eye of Ahn's boss, who raped her. He was demoted and she was sent to the detention camp. A year later, on his way to the camp's coal mine, Ahn saw Han again. 'How did you survive?' he asked.

She showed him that her body was covered in burns. Six months later, he came across her again, yning pads of tyre-number round her knees. A runaway coal wagon had cut off her lower legs.

Ahn felt uncomfortable about what he was doing. 'I had the chance to talk to the prisoners and found they were not guilty. And when I saw an elderly person faced in front of a young guard, my heart was breaking. This was not humane. Ahn was forced to leave Camp 22 to prison. He defected to South Korea.

They say *bach, son-ye-g-bitch, give up hope. You'll never get out of here. They don't*

위험한 WORK

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동물 ANIMAL

A woman arriving at Yodok saw what she took to be animals, before realising with a shock that they were hunched up human beings. Pinned to their ragged, rows of masks on the uniform of a field marshal, were small flayed frogs.

Prisoners had no time for any means of washing their clothes. There was no choice but to wear them crusted with dirt and teeming with vermin. They had to endure the filth until rainstorms did their laundry and allowed their itching.

A witness relates that guards would sometimes order a new inmate to bury a corpse and put on the clothes from the dead body.